

REMARKS

35 USC § 102(b)

Claims 9-14 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Rudolph (U.S. Pat. No. 4,161,393). The Applicant respectfully disagrees, especially in view of the amendments herein.

The applicant appreciates the examiner's remarks on page 2 of the office action regarding the lack of specific recitation that only the first portion would be combined with steam. To help overcome this concern, the applicant amended claim 9 to expressly require

"...combining ***only the first portion*** with steam sufficient to support a shift reaction to form a steam-containing first portion... and "...***bypassing the second portion around the first shift reactor*** and combining the first shift reactor effluent with the second portion to form a mixed feed gas..."

This amendment should clearly differentiate over Rudolph as the '393 patent requires that the entire raw gas stream from the gasification unit or partial oxidation unit is saturated with water in substantial excess over stoichiometric amounts, and that the so produced wet steam is fed at different positions to a chain of reactors. In other words, Rudolph requires over-saturation of raw gas with steam to produce high concentrations of hydrogen to so hydrogenate otherwise detrimental hydrocarbons (see *e.g.*, column 2, lines 3-18). Therefore, Rudolph critically relies on water saturated raw gas, which is contrary to the claimed subject matter. Therefore, the rejection of claims 9-14 as being anticipated by Rudolph should be withdrawn.

Regarding the examiner's observation that the amounts (of the second portion) used in Rudolph would be effective to reduce steam consumption, the applicant notes that Rudolph teaches that the "...addition of steam can be avoided or much reduced if the raw gas produced by the pressure gasification of coal is saturated with water vapor before it is fed to the shift conversion equipment..." Clearly, Rudolph teaches water saturation as a means to reduce steam consumption. Therefore, based on the above arguments and amendments to claim 9, the rejection of claims 9-14 should be withdrawn.

35 USC § 103(a)

Claim 15 was rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Rudolph in view of Schmid (U.S. Pat. No. 4,159,236). The Applicant again respectfully disagrees.

With respect to Rudolph, the same considerations and arguments as discussed above apply and are therefore not reiterated here. While the applicant agrees that Schmid teaches an acid gas removal unit to produce a fuel gas, Schmid fails to remedy the defects in Rudolph as pointed out above. Consequently, the rejection of claim 15 as being obvious over Rudolph in view of Schmid should be withdrawn.

REQUEST FOR ALLOWANCE

Claims 1-15 are pending in this application with claims 1-8 being withdrawn. The applicant requests allowance of all pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,
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